



Foreign Relations, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, South Asia, 1969-1972

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FROM AMBASSADOR

SUBJ
LOCAL POLITCAL SITUATION

1. NEBULOUS RUMORS ARE FLOATING AROUND THAT, PARTLY BECAUSE OF PRESSURE FROM HIS FAMILY, AYUB MAY BE CONSIDERING MAKING EFFORT AT COMPROMISE WITH OPPOSITION WHEREBY WE WOULD AGREE EITHER NOT- RPT NOT-RUN AGAIN OR RESIGN SHORTLY AFTER RE-ELECTION IN RETURN FOR ASSURANCES SECURITY PERSONS AND PROPERTY SELF AND FAMILY.
2. DIFFICULT TO SEE WHAT ASSURANCES COULD BE CONSIDERED RELIABLE.
3. AS SUCH RUMORS PERSIST AND AS CRESCENDO STUDENT AND POLITICAL UNREST MOUNTS, I AM REMINDED OF TWO INCIDENTS, BOTH OF WHICH TOOK PLACE BEFORE TROUBLES STARTED, AND WHICH DID NOT-RPT NOT- SEEM PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT AT THE TIME, AS FOLLOWS:

(A) WHEN AYUB TOOK ME TO HIS ORANGE GROVES, I BELIEVE ON OR ABOUT AUGUST 25, HE REMARKED THAT HE DREADED THE PROSPECTS OF ANOTHER POLITICAL CAMPAIGN IN WHICH HE WOULD QUOTE: HAVE TO TRAVEL ALL OVER THE COUNTRY QUOTE KISSING BABIES' ASSES UNQUOTE.

(B) IN A LONGHAND LETTER TO ME DATED OCTOBER 3, 1968 IN COMMENTING ON PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S DECISION NOT - RPT NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY NOT - TO RUN FOR RE-ELECTION, HE WROTE QUOTE I CAME TO KNOW OF THE DETAILS SOME TIME AGO. BUT EVEN WHEN THE PRESIDENT MET ME ON THE AIRPORT AT KARACHI LAST NOVEMBER (SIC) HE SPOKE IN SIMILAR STRAIN. I THEN FORMED THE IMPRESSION THAT UNLESS HE OBTAINED MASSIVE OPEN SUPPORT FROM THE PEOPLE, HE WOULD NOT - RPT NOT-RUN. THAT IS THE WAY OF A PROUD AND SENSITIVE MAN. UNQUOTE.
4. LOOKING BACK TO THAT PERIOD OF TRANQUILITY, IT NOW RPT NOW SEEMS EVIDENT THAT WE HAD LITTLE STOMACH FOR A CAMPAIGN AND THAT HE WAS SYMPATHETIC TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S SITUATION AND PROBLEMS.
5. MOST OF US, AND MOST THIRD COUNTRY PEOPLE HERE, HAVE FELT THAT AYUB WILL WEATHER THE STORM PROVIDED:

(A) HIS HEALTH DOES NOT - RPT - NOT FAIL AGAIN;
(B) HE HAS THE WILL TO RUN; AND
(C) THE MILITARY DOESN'T - RPT NOT - DECIDE TO QUOTE ASK HIM OUT END QUOTE.
6. THERE, IS STILL NO - RPT - NO EVIDENCE THAT 5 (C) ABOVE MAY TAKE PLACE.
7. I HAVE SEEN A GOOD DEAL OF AYUB LATELY AT STATE DINNERS AND ON ANOTHER PRIVATE TRIP TO HIS GROVES ON JANUARY 12. HE GIVES EVERY EVIDENCE OF HAVING FULLY RECOVERED FROM HIS ILLNESS.
8. RE PARAGRAPH 5(B) ABOVE, THE TWO INCIDENTS REFERRED TO IN PARAGRAPH 3 ABOVE WOULD INDICATE THAT EVEN BEFORE THE TROUBLES HE MAY HAVE BEEN CONTEMPLATING RETIREMENT. THE RUMORS REFERRED TO IN PARAGRAPH 1 ABOVE, IF OF ANY VALIDITY, WOULD INDICATE THAT THE PROSPECT IS STILL VERY MUCH ON HIS MIND.
9. ON THE OTHER HAND, HIS CHARACTER, AT LEAST PRIOR TO HIS ILLNESS, WOULD SUGGEST THAT WE WOULD REACT ADVERSELY TO (THE PROSPECT OF WITHDRAWING UNDER FIRE EVEN IF HE HAD BEEN CONTEMPLATING IT PREVIOUSLY.
10. THE NEXT FEW DAYS OR WEEKS SHOULD INDICATE WHETHER OR NOT - RPT NOT - HE HAS THE WILL AND THE MEANS TO CARRY ON. IF NOT - RPT NOT-AFTER HIM MAY COME THE DELUGE.

OEHLERT

